(b) how many vacancies are lying vacant which are reserved for OBC; and

(e) what are the efforts made by the authorities concerned to fill up the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) to (c) Out of IS /acanciea in the grade of Sepoys to be filled up by direct recruitment in the Collectorate of Central Excise and Customs, Delhi, due percentage of reservation meant for OBC, as par rules is applicable. The Collectorate have already initiated the recruit, rnent exercise by calling names of ths candidates including those belonging to OBCs from appropriate agencies.

Raids by income tax department on the premises of firms missing vabal

96. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN": SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) how many raids were conducted by the Income Tax Department in the different metropolitan cities on the premises of the firms suspected to have misused Value Based Licences (VABAL.) and avoided payment of tax;

(b) what is the outcome of these raids and what amount of income tax avoidance by these firms has been detected;

(c) what action hai been taken to recover the avoided income tax from these firms and what penalty has been imposed on them for misuse of VABAL; and

(d) what steps havw been taken/ proposed to be taken by Government to curb this misuse?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY); (a) to (c) The Income-tax Department searched 42 premises of four groups of aesesseeg at Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta.

The searches resulted in the seizure of unaccounted assets as under: —

Cash . . .	Rs. 1,56,15,600/-
Jewellery . .	Rs. 31,43,745/-
Other Assets .	Rs. 26,27,210/-
Total .	Rs. 2,13,86,555/-

Tax evaded income totalling Rs. a,31 tore were disclosed by these assessees in course of the searches.

Necessary follow.up actiong have been taken up on the basis of the seized materials. The Director Gen eral of Foreign Trade has been in timated regarding the search by the Income-tax Department for taking necessary action under the relevant provisions.

(1) The Director General of Foreign Trade has informed that in order to curb the misuse of VABAL Scheme, the following steps have been taken: —

(i) Initially Value based licences could be issued by Regional Licensing Authorities (RLAs) where input output and value addition norms were fixed amd'also where'norms were, not fixed. However, in July, '92 powers of RLAs to issue value .lased advance licences where norms were not fixed were withdrawn. Subsequently, in October, '92 the scheme was further tightened and value based advance licences could be issued only where input output and valuej addition norma were fixed.

(ii) With effect from 1.4.93 the expott obligation has been imposed

with both quantity and value restrictions through initially quantities of those export products were not mentioned.]

(iii) The issuance of Advance Release Orders and Intermediate Advance Licences under VABAL Schema have been stopped with effect from 1.4.93.

(iv) The flexible value addition benefit under para 53 of the Exim Policy originally extended to the drug sector has been withdrawn with effect from October, 92.

(v) Quantity and value have been restricted in respect of Hems for which the duty plus auxiliary duty ranges from u to 10 per cent and for certain packing materials, with effect from October, 1992.

(vi) Quality and value have been restricted in respect of items which constitute upto 2 per cent by weight quantity in the export product with effect from 1.4.93.

(vii) The list of sensitive items was expanded further and items such as Lime stone Furnace Oil Lubricat. ing Oil/Gear' oil, Adhesive Tape, Plasticizer, some solvents and chemicals etc. have been included in the list with effect from September, 1993.

(viii) Issue of Value Based Licen-ce for Silk items has been totally withdrawn.

(ix) The list of sensitive item.? has been expanded by placing 20 more items in the sensitive list vide Public Notice No. 163 dated 14th September, 1993.

(x) All Value based advance licances where neither any import nor any export took place have been I frozen vide notification dated 25.1.94 Such licence holders have, however, I been given option to get their lieences endorsed for making imports in accordance with the Policy prevalent on the date of such endorsement

(xi) Further, an inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted by the Government in February, 94 to critically examine the operation of the VABAL Scheme, to find out areas and extent of abuse/misuse or oopholes in the scheme and to suggest remedial measures.

Indian Debt to Russia

97. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) The total amount of Indian debt to Russia at present;

(b) whether the P.M. during his recent visit to the Soviet Union dis cussed the matter with that Govern ment about its proposed auctioning by Russia;

(c) if so, outcome thereof;

(d) How it is utimately proposed to deal with this matter; and

(e) whether Russia is likely to peek India's consent for right to use funds accumulated in the Russian account with the Reserve Bank for setting up joint ventures in India;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY); (e.) Inlia's outstanding debt to Russia as on 31.3.1994 was atiout Rs. 30,386 crores.

(b) to (d) This subject was discussed in the course of the Prime Minister's visit to the Russian Federation. The Russian Government has indicated it's intention to auction I a portion of